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Letter from John Moody McCaleb to V. M. Metcalfe

John Moody McCaleb

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12 Butsiji Takyo Japan.
Jan 31 st. 89.

Dear Uncle Minnie,

Your Christmas & New Year gift of Stories received a few days ago. Our little girl - two years old - would not go to bed that night till she had carefully turned every page and looked at every picture. She can only read the pictures as yet. These she has pretty well learned already. In her turning the other day I stopped her as she came to Old Kentucky Home and sang it for her. Although she only knows three letters as yet and cannot read a word she ~~can~~ has ever since been able to find Old Kentucky Home herself and often brings it to Papa to sing.

I need hardly tell you I am enough of a child to take great delight in the stories myself - ^{have} ~~had~~ read them through already. Wife and I happened to read your experience with the bull dogs at the wedding separately and alone

happy and hurts no one. That is if
boys and girls will be manly and womanly
with it all. An experience was so nearly
the same I am constrained to give you
an extract from a few lines written some
years ago ^{on this subject,} my first teacher, unlike yours, didn't
believe in any such foolishness;

I always tried my task to know,
And ever do her will;
But this one thing she ^[teacher] asked of us,
I ne'er could quite fulfill.

She wore the name that thousands wear,
Of plain pronunciation.

But worn by her it seemed to have
A kind of fascination.

So when the roll was called each morn,
(From which she'd never vary)

The name of all that charmed me most
Was that of little Mary.

Or if perchance we stood in class,
Each by the other's side,

I'd slightly think, Some coming day,
That she would be my bride.

The flower budded pure and sweet
But ne'er to fully bloom.

One day its folds with heavily glowed
The next 'twas in the tomb.

each had the experience of bursting out into a fit of laughter all by ourselves.

There is so little to criticise in the book I believe I shall not offer any. It seems to me however you destroy the unity of one story when you have all the little boys and girls sit down and be quiet while you take a trip up Green River. It seems to me it would be better to take them with you from the out set, as they join company with you before you have gone far on the trip any way, rather than leave them behind.

My favorite story of them all is your return to the old home after twenty-five years of absence. I have never read anything more beautiful and touching and that strikes so tender a chord in my own heart.

And you had a little sweet heart. Well, so did I.* I suppose most little boys do. It is well that it is so. It helps to make one have high aspirations, is a great restraint from doing mean things - for who would have his sweet heart know that he wasn't noble - makes the ~~the~~ young heart tender and

childish heart
 My ~~heart~~ ^{heart} ~~indeed~~ was made quite sad
 To know that she was dead.
 But lest I should be thought to love
 No tears I ever shed.

Many of your rambles in the
 woods, ~~coon~~ ^{and my own experience} hunts and chestnut hunts
 are so true to life, that I can almost
 hear the dogs barking or the autumn
 leaves rattling. In my judgment it
 is a book best adapted to the actual
 surroundings of the average boy and girl
 and best calculated to do them good
 of any such book of like character I
 have ever seen. May the Lord be
 gracious unto thee and yet spare you
 many years to teach the young.
 Yours in Brotherly Love
 J. M. Calhoun